



Kathleen Sebelius, Governor  
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND ENVIRONMENT

[www.kdheks.gov](http://www.kdheks.gov)

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## **September is Baby Safety Month KDHE Reminds Parents and Caregivers of Need for Safe Sleeping Practices**

This September marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Baby Safety Month. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) supports Safe Kids in reminding parents and others who provide care for babies of the measures they can take to protect infants from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), as well as other preventable causes of infant injury or death.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), infants who are placed on their stomachs to sleep have a five times greater risk of dying from SIDS. The AAP further states that infants normally placed to sleep on their backs, who are then placed on their stomachs to sleep, are as much as 18 times more likely to die from SIDS.

“Parents should communicate with relatives, child care providers and anyone else taking care of their child about the importance of safe sleep practices. This needs to take place before the first day the child is cared for and should be emphasized routinely,” said Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary of KDHE. “Safe sleep practices can help prevent suffocation and reduce the risks associated with SIDS.”

Approximately 20 percent of SIDS deaths in the U.S. occur while the infant is in the care of a non-parental caregiver. In Kansas, 63 percent of children less than 12 years of age are in an out-of-home child care setting.

In 2007, 14 Kansas children died in regulated child care. Twelve of these deaths were infants between 1 and 8 months of age. They were cared for in day care homes and were found unresponsive while napping. The remaining two deaths were school-age children; one drowning and one from natural causes.

Analysis of the data collected by KDHE shows that 75 percent of the infants who died in child care in 2007 were either placed to sleep on their stomach or side and/or placed on an adult bed or in a baby seat instead of on their back in an approved crib or playpen. In addition, documentation indicates that in many of the cases the infants were not supervised during their rest period, meaning they were not regularly checked while napping and/or they were not within hearing distance of the provider.

The safest way for an infant to sleep, whether at night or during the day, is on his or her back, in an approved crib or playpen that meets all current national safety standards, with no soft bedding, toys or pillows. Distance between crib slats should be 2 3/8 inches or less to avoid entrapment. The mattress should fit securely in the crib (no more than two fingers of space between crib and mattress) and be free of all plastic wrappings. Be wary of used cribs, especially those constructed before 1991 when newer safety standards were developed.

On August 27, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warned consumers to stop using convertible “close-sleeper/bedside sleeper” bassinets that have been involved in the strangulation deaths of two infants. The CPSC also is urging retailers to stop the sale of and recall nearly 900,000 bassinets manufactured by Simplicity, Inc. of Reading, Pa.

Please keep the following safety tips in mind to prevent infant injury and death:

- Buy only age-appropriate toys for your baby. Small toys and toy parts can choke infants – when in doubt, use a small parts tester, a tool used to determine if a toy, toy part, or other item poses a choking risk to children under age 3.
- Make sure household cleaners, medicines and vitamins are locked up or out of reach and away from your baby. Keep poisonous plants out of sight and reach.
- Use a child safety seat on every ride. Infants should ride in rear-facing child safety seats – in the back seat of the vehicle – until they are at least 1 year old and at least 20 pounds. Never place a rear-facing infant in the front seat of a car equipped with an active airbag.
- An infant (or child) can drown in just a few inches of water. Never leave infants unattended near pools, sinks, tubs, buckets and containers. Drain or empty any containers immediately after use.
- Set the temperature on your water heater’s thermostat at 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms (outside bedrooms and on every floor) and carbon monoxide detectors (in every sleeping area) in your home.
- If your house or apartment was built before 1978, have a professional test your home for lead-based paint. If there is lead paint in your home, the paint should be completely removed or covered with an approved sealant.
- Install safety guards on windows. Consider using cordless window coverings to avoid strangulation hazards posed by drapery and blind cords.
- Avoid baby walkers on wheels – use stationary activity centers or other walker alternatives instead.

For more information on keeping babies safe, please visit the Safe Kids Kansas website at [www.kansassafekids.org](http://www.kansassafekids.org); the American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org); or check for recalled children’s products on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

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*Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.*